

SEM-II MIC ENGLISH

God Character Analysis: Book of Jobs

God

The creator of the world and an all-powerful being. God calls himself the only true deity worthy of human worship. As the figurehead of Israel and the force behind every event, God acts as the unseen hero of the Old Testament. God reveals his intentions by speaking to people. Physical manifestations of God are always indirect or symbolic. God appears in many different forms, including an angel, a wrestler, a burst of fire, and a quiet whisper.

In the Old Testament, God is unique, sovereign, and unchanging. He differs from Greek gods, whose faults and quarrels cause events. His unchanging nature is hinted at by his names. In biblical Hebrew, God is called "YAHWEH," meaning "to be." This title is similar to the title God uses with Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." However, the God presented in Old Testament does contradict himself at times. In the course of two chapters in Exodus, God threatens to destroy the Israelites, relents, and then pronounces himself loving, forgiving, and slow to anger. God grants himself the power of self-description; he is whoever he says he is.

Each biblical writer gives God human characteristics. For example, God speaks. We do not know how his listeners recognize that it is he who is speaking or what he sounds like, but God certainly embraces the ability to articulate his intentions through the human convention of language. Also, God assumes human form. He appears as an angel, as a group of three men, and as a mysterious army commander. In a sense, God takes on human qualities like a costume that can also be taken off, since his specific appearances do not offer a complete picture of him. Still, these manifestations suggest that there is a fundamental humanity to the personality of the Hebrew God. God casually walks in the garden with Adam and Eve. He even physically wrestles Jacob and allows Jacob to beat him. These humble and endearing qualities of God contrast his later appearances as a pillar of fire and a thunderous mountain. The more extreme manifestations are, like the human manifestations, only a part of God's character rather than his sole mode of existence.

God's initial interaction with humankind is unsolicited. Noah, Abraham, and Moses do not ask God to form a relationship with them. Even when God is unseen, his immense power over human fate lurks beneath the events of the Old Testament narrative. On the surface, the

characters' experiences are filled with suspense. The characters submit to chance and have a desperate, irrational faith in God. When God speaks or appears, we realize he has been in control all along, and the fear or suspense seems unfounded, trite, or comical. Amidst the gravity of human events, God's willingness to cause momentous events in order to teach a lesson shows him to be a strangely playful character.